



CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF HONEY IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

With the development of civilization, honey acquired a unique status in the lives of the ancient Indians. Honey and beekeeping have a long history in India. Honey was the first sweet food tasted by the ancient Indian inhabiting rock shelters and forests. In Kerala honey is mainly consumed for medicinal purpose only and it is not accepted as a normal food item as it is consumed in western countries. This is mainly due to poor marketing strategies adopted by concerned parties. The study investigates the factors that affect the green products with special focus on honey buying behaviours of the consumers.

KEYWORDS: Bee Keeping, Consumers, Green Products, Honey.

INTRODUCTION

Honey and beekeeping have a long history in India. Honey was the first sweet food tasted by the ancient Indian inhabiting rock shelters and forests. He hunted bee hives for this gift of god. India has some of the oldest records of beekeeping in the form of paintings by prehistoric man in the rock shelters. With the development of civilization, honey acquired a unique status in the lives of the ancient Indians. They regarded honey as a magical substance that controlled the fertility of women, cattle, as also their lands and crops. The recent past has witnessed a revival of the industry in the rich forest regions along the sub-Himalayan mountain ranges and the Western Ghats, where it has been practiced in simplest form

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In this context it is significant to study the consumer perception of honey in Kerala.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer behaviour is defined as the behaviour that consumers project in searching for, using, purchasing, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they assume will satisfy their needs (Pelau, 2011)

Not overlooking that consumers always put their interest and their money into foods that are free from contaminants, pesticides, chemicals and other health risks so that they are somehow able to feel assured in their rational mind (Mintel Organic Foods, 2006, p.1)

According to Phipps (2012), industries that sell natural products tend to generate a connection bond and send confident messages to consumers so that there will be an increase of consumption level, new products are developed, consumers' perception value boosted and the increased entrance of higher quality products into the market.

Peter(2012)In Perth, Western Australia, honey is primarily consumed as a spread or a sweetener on breakfast cereals and porridge. However, honey is also used as a marinade, in cakes and cookies and as a beverage. According to the way in which honey is consumed in the household, five clusters were identified. In purchasing honey from a retail store, exploratory factor analysis revealed three principal constructs which were most influential in the consumer's decision to purchase: brand reputation, origin and value for money. Ethnicity was found to have a significant influence on the way in which honey was consumed in the household and the importance of the three constructs extracted.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Kerala being the major tropical ecosystem characterized of rich biodiversity with abundant scope for natural products. Regardless of diet, organic foods are a smart priority. Opting for organic foods is an effectual choice for personal and planetary health. Buying organically grown food—free of harmful chemicals, bursting with more nutrition, taste, and sustainable sustenance—is a direct vote for immediate health and the hopeful future of generations to come. In this context it is significant to study the consumer buying behaviour of honey.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on the following specific objective:

- To analyse the consumer buying behaviour of honey.
- To analyse the reasons behind low domestic consumption of honey.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was designed as descriptive in nature based on the survey method. Both primary and secondary data was used for the study. Since it is difficult to contact the entire population, sampling technique was adopted. The respondents were interviewed using convenience sampling method. This study was conducted in Kottayam district. Sample was around 80 consumers selected on convenience basis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Majority of the respondents age (65%) belonged to the group 30-40.
2. It was found that there were equal respondents from male and female.
3. 50 percent respondents having university education and above.
4. The study proved that 45% of the respondents use honey in their household.
5. Majority of the respondents (80%) bought honey only occasionally.
6. It was found that only (30%) of the respondents know about the benefit of honey.
7. Most of the respondents got information of honey from other sources like friends, relatives etc... than from magazines, newspapers, radio and television.
8. Majority of the respondents (33%) shopped honey from special honey shops.
9. Most of the respondents looked for the quality of the honey and none of them look for packaging.
10. About 40% of the respondents agreed that honey is much healthier than other sweeteners.
11. It was found that 55 percent of the respondents agreed that honey is having a nutritional value.
12. It was found 20 percent somewhat agreed that the brand of honey influence their purchase decision.
13. The study proved that the respondents do not compare the price of the available brands before purchasing honey.
14. The label of honey was found useful for 60 percent of the respondents.
15. Majority of the respondent were not comfortable with the bottles and therefore they wish to have honey in sachets.
16. About 60 percent stated that, the price of honey is not affordable to them

From the study the respondents opined that price discount and quality of product can increase the quantity of the honey to be purchased.

CONCLUSION

The study investigates the factors that affect the green products with special focus on honey buying behaviours of the consumers. Efforts should be taken to

conduct awareness programmes in educational institutions to impart the nutritional value and health benefits of honey and should educate the consumer about the quality characteristics of honey in order to create consumer confidence in the product. Hence we can create an environmental friendly consumer environment.

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